UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CN.10/PV.162
17 December 1991

ENGLISH

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SECOND MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on
Tuesday, 3 December 1991, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria)

- Opening of the session
- Adoption of the agenda
- Election of the Chairman and other officers for 1992
- Review of the draft resolutions adopted by the First Committee at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly relating to the Disarmament Commission
- Draft provisional agenda for the 1992 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission
- Organizational matters
- Closure of the session

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages, preferably in the same language as the text to which they refer. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also, if possible, incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent, within one week of the date of this document, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

91-61935 7749V (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: I declare open the 1991 organizational session of the Disarmament Commission.

As in past years, the Commission is convened today for a brief session to deal with organizational matters, including the election of a new bureau for 1992, the appointment of the chairmen of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, and its draft provisional agenda for the next substantive session, in accordance with its reform programme, entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission", which was adopted in 1990.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The CHAIRMAN: If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission agrees to adopt the agenda contained in document A/CN.10/L.29.

The agenda was adopted.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND OTHER OFFICERS FOR 1992

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with the established principle of rotation for the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission, the candidacy for the chairmanship for 1992 should come from the Group of Eastern European States. In that connection, I am pleased to report to the Commission that the Group of Eastern European States has endorsed the candidacy of Ambassador André Erdös of Hungary for election to the post of Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for the year 1992.

If I hear no comments, I shall take it that it is the wish of the Commission that Ambassador André Erdös of Hungary be elected Chairman by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I now declare Ambassador Andre Erdös elected Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for the year 1992.

Ambassador Erdös is a very distinguished diplomat of his country, and has been well known in United Nations diplomatic circles for many years. His extensive experience in the field of disarmament is highly regarded. He is currently the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations in New York. In the course of the past years he has been very active in sessions of the General Assembly and the First Committee, as well as in other important disarmament conferences and in sessions of the Disarmament Commission. During the 1991 session he served as Chairman of Working Group I of the Commission, which dealt with "Objective information on military matters". I believe that, under the leadership of Ambassador Erdös, with his broad experience in the United Nations and his expertise in the field of disarmament, the Disarmament Commission will carry out its work successfully at the next substantive session, in 1992. May I extend to him, on behalf of the Commission, my warmest congratulations and wish him every success.

Mr. ERDOS (Hungary): Very briefly, Mr. Chairman, I should like to thank you for your kind words and also for the way you have introduced me to the Commission. May I also take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the members of the Commission for the honour conferred not only on me but also on my country, the Republic of Hungary. As Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for the year 1992, I shall do my best to contribute to the successful performance that is rightfully expected from this important international forum for disarmament deliberations.

In my conduct of business I plan to count on the cooperation of all

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

delegations and on the indispensable support of Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, and on the skill of the able and experienced members of the Secretariat.

In conclusion, although promises are not solicited at this moment, I wish to express my intention to try to live up to the high standards that my predecessor in the Chair, Ambassador Peter Hohenfellner of Austria, has established.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall now proceed to the election of the other officers of the Commission - eight Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur - for the year 1992, as endorsed by the regional groups.

Before I proceed to do so, I should like to mention that, owing to specific circumstances, last-minute consultations had to be held with regard to the African candidates for the Bureau. Our very good friend, Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya of Zaire, who had been prepared to chair next year's Working Group on the Role of Science and Technology in the Context of International Security, Disarmament and other Related Fields, was called by his Government a few days ago to assume the position of Foreign Minister. We wish our former colleague, the new Foreign Minister of Zaire, Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, wholeheartedly all the best in assuming the responsibilities of the new post in which he will serve his country. Ambassador Bagbeni's sudden promotion did cause some last-minute problems for the 1992 session of the Disarmament Commission.

Fortunately, it was possible for these problems to be solved with the help and welcome cooperation of the highly esteemed representative of Ghana, Ambassador Kofi Awoonor, who agreed to chair next year's Working Group on

(The Chairman)

Science and Technology. This consequently necessitated further consultations on the vice-chairmanships to be assumed by the African Group. I am happy to announce that Cameroon and Egypt have now been proposed to us as the respective Vice-Chairmen.

Let us now proceed to the election of the other officers of the Commission. I wish to announce the following candidates.

First, the Group of African States has endorsed the candidacy of Egypt and Cameroon for vice-chairmanship of the Commission for 1992.

Secondly, the Group of Asian States has endorsed the candidacy of Malaysia and Nepal for vice-chairmanship of the Commission for 1992.

Thirdly, the Group of Eastern European States has endorsed the candidacy of Romania for vice-chairmanship of the Commission for 1992.

Fourthly, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States has endorsed the candidacy of Brazil and Uruguay for vice-chairmanship of the Commission for 1992.

Fifthly, the Group of Western European and Other States has endorsed the candidacy of Finland for vice-chairmanship of the Commission for 1992.

If I hear no comment, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect the representatives of the aforementioned countries as Vice-Chairmen of the Commission for 1992 by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: The next issue is the election of the Rapporteur of the Commission for 1992. The candidate for that post should come from the Group of Western European and Other States. In this regard, I am pleased to

(The Chairman)

report that the Group has nominated Mr. Bob Hiensch of the Netherlands to the post. If I hear no comment, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect Mr. Bob Hiensch of the Netherlands as Rapporteur of the Disarmament Commission for 1992 by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to extend my warm congratulations to Mr. Bob Hiensch of the Netherlands on his election as Rapporteur of the Commission. I am sure that he will make an important contribution to the work of the Commission in 1992.

REVIEW OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE FIRST COMMITTEE AT THE FORTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY RELATING TO THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

The CHAIRMAN: As members of the Commission are aware, the First Committee of the General Assembly at its current session adopted five draft resolutions which are of direct relevance to the Commission's work. For the sake of clarity and for the benefit of the members of the Commission, I shall refer to those draft resolutions, which will soon be submitted to the General Assembly for adoption.

The first of these draft resolutions is A/C.1/46/L.3, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission", which was adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 62 (a). Paragraphs 1-10 of the draft resolution read as follows:

"1. Takes note of the annual report of the Disarmament Commission;

"2. Notes with satisfaction that the Disarmament Commission has successfully implemented its reform programme and has made considerable progress on substantive items on its agenda, pursuant to the adopted 'Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission';

(The Chairman)

"3. Recalls the role of the Disarmament Commission as the specialized, deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery that allows for in-depth deliberations on specific disarmament issues, leading to the submission of concrete recommendations on those issues;

"4. Requests the Disarmament Commission to continue its work in accordance with its mandate, as set forth in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, and with paragraph 3 of resolution 37/78 H, and to that end to make every effort to achieve specific recommendations on the items on its agenda, taking into account the adopted "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission".

(The Chairman)

"5. Stresses the importance for the Disarmament Commission to work on the basis of a relevant agenda of disarmament topics, thereby enabling the Commission to concentrate its efforts and thus optimize its progress on specific subjects in accordance with resolution 37/78 H;

"6. Recommends that the Disarmament Commission, at the 1991 organizational session, adopt the following items for its consideration at the 1992 substantive session:

"(1) Objective information on military matters;

"(2) Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons;

"(3) Regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security;

"(4) The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields;

"7. Also requests the Disarmament Commission to meet for a period not exceeding four weeks during 1992 and to submit a substantive report to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session;

"8. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit to the Disarmament Commission the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament, together with all the official records of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly relating to disarmament matters, and to render all assistance that the Commission may require for implementing the present resolution;

"9. Also requests the Secretary-General to ensure full provision to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies of interpretation and translation facilities in the official languages, and to assign, as a matter of priority, all the necessary resources and services to this end;

(The Chairman)

"10. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-seventh session the item entitled 'Report of the Disarmament Commission'."

The second draft resolution is A/C.1/46/L.18/Rev.1, entitled "Transparency in armaments", which was adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 60 (b). Operative paragraph 14 of the draft resolution reads as follows:

"14. Invites the Secretary-General to provide to the Conference on Disarmament all relevant information, including, inter alia, views submitted to him by Member States, information provided under the United Nations Standardized Reporting System on Military Expenditures, as well as the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission under its item entitled 'Objective information on military matters'".

The third draft resolution is A/C.1/46/L.23/Rev.1, entitled "International arms transfers", which was adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 60 (b). Operative paragraph 10 of the draft resolution reads as follows:

"10. Requests the Disarmament Commission, at its organizational session in 1992, to consider including the issue of international arms transfers in the agenda of its substantive session in 1993".

The fourth draft resolution is A/C.1/46/L.27, entitled "Transparency of military expenditures", which was adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 47 (a) and (b). The last preambular paragraph of the draft resolution reads as follows:

(The Chairman)

"Recalling that the Disarmament Commission in dealing with objective information on military matters is currently developing principles, mechanisms, and guidelines aimed at the enhancement of openness and transparency in military matters, including military expenditures".

Operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution reads as follows:

"2. Encourages the Disarmament Commission to finalize its work on objective information on military matters in 1992".

The fifth draft resolution is A/C.1/46/L.29, entitled "The transfer of high technology with military applications", which was adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 62 (a). Operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution reads as follows:

"1. Calls upon the Disarmament Commission to continue its consideration within the scope of its agenda of all relevant aspects of the question of the transfer of high technology with military applications at its 1992 session, with a view to concluding its work on this matter at its 1993 session".

I have just outlined the draft resolutions which have direct relevance to the work of the Commission.

DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE 1992 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

The CHAIRMAN: In preparing the draft provisional agenda, we have taken account of the relevant draft resolutions adopted by the First Committee, as I have just indicated. For the convenience of the members of the Commission, the elements of the draft provisional agenda have been included in conference room paper A/CN.10/1991/CRP.7, which has been distributed to all members.

(The Chairman)

I wish to point out that in that paper items 4 to 7 are the substantive agenda items for next year. They are the same as those of the 1991 substantive session and have been agreed upon by members of the Commission. Therefore, these items have been included in draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.3, which is to be adopted by the General Assembly.

If there is no objection, the draft provisional agenda for the 1992 substantive session, as contained in document A/CN.10/1991/CRP/7, is approved.

The draft provisional agenda was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: As representatives are aware, those four items were the subjects considered by the Commission at its substantive session this year. Three of them will be entering the second year of deliberation. The item "Objective information on military matters" will reach its last stage of consideration, and work on it should conclude next year, in accordance with the provision of the adopted reform programme. With the early election of the officers of the Commission, the Chairman of the Commission and the chairmen of the four working groups will be in a position to start early consultations. These preparatory consultations will definitely facilitate work during the substantive session.

I would like now to refer to draft resolution A/C.1/46/L.3, which I mentioned a moment ago. It should be pointed out that the beginning of operative paragraph 6 was drafted on the assumption that the draft might be adopted by the General Assembly before the Commission's organizational session. Since it is now evident that the draft has not yet been adopted by the Assembly, the beginning of the paragraph should be amended to read:

"Notes with satisfaction that the Disarmament Commission, at the 1991 organizational session, has adopted the following items for its consideration at the 1992 substantive session".

(The Chairman)

The list of the four adopted agenda items will follow.

If there is no objection to this small change, the appropriate amendment, as I have just read it out, will be introduced at the plenary meeting of the General Assembly when the draft resolution is taken up, which I hear will be on Friday morning.

It was so decided.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

The CHAIRMAN: Organizational matters include the establishment of subsidiary bodies and the appointment of chairmen of subsidiary bodies as well as the adoption of the date, duration and programme of work for the 1992 substantive session.

Since the Disarmament Commission has agreed upon four substantive agenda items for the 1992 substantive session, it may wish, as in the 1991 session, to continue to have four working groups to deal with these four subjects.

(The Chairman)

If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Disarmament Commission wishes to renew the following subsidiary bodies:

(a) The Committee of the Whole will deal with items 8 and 9 as well as any other issues concerned;

(b) Working Group I will deal with item 4, "Objective information on military matters";

(c) Working Group II will deal with item 5, "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons";

(d) Working Group III will deal with item 6, "Regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security";

(e) Working Group IV will deal with item 7, "The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields".

May I take it that the Commission agrees to the establishment of these Working Groups and other subsidiary bodies?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: Having renewed the mandates of its subsidiary bodies for the 1992 substantive session, the Commission may now wish to appoint the respective Chairmen of the four Working Groups. The question at this stage is who will chair which Group on what item.

In this connection, I should like to draw the attention of members of the Commission to the provision in paragraph 4, subparagraph 1, of the adopted "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission",

(The Chairman)

which reads, inter alia:

"... The allocation of the agenda items to the four subsidiary bodies and the appointment of the chairmen for these subsidiary bodies should be decided at the organizational session of the Commission, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution."

(A/46/42,para.7("4"))

I am very pleased to report that as a result of extensive consultations among and within the five regional groups, the arrangements for the chairmanship of the four Working Groups in 1992 are the following:

(1) Ambassador Carl-Magnus Hyltenius of Sweden will chair Working Group I on "Objective information on military matters";

(2) Ambassador Prakash Shah of India will chair Working Group II, on "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons";

(3) Ambassador Ricardo Luna of Peru will chair Working Group III, on "Regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security";

(4) Ambassador Kofi Awoonor of Ghana will chair Working Group IV, on "The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields".

In this context I would like specifically to thank Mr. Awoonor, who was prepared at the very last minute to take over this extremely important Working Group and thereby contribute to our progress in the next year.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission agrees to these arrangements.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: The third question is the date and duration of the 1992 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. As members are aware, the Conference on Disarmament will finish the first part of its 1992 session on 27 March 1992. The Preparatory Committee for the Second Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques will hold its session from 6 to 10 April 1992. The Commission may therefore wish to schedule its 1992 substantive session from 20 April to 11 May 1992 for a period of three weeks and one day - the same duration as that of the 1990 and 1991 sessions.

If there is no objection, the 1992 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission will be held from 20 April to 11 May 1992.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: In order to facilitate the work of the next substantive session of the Commission, the secretariat has prepared a draft programme of work, which has been distributed to members as conference room paper A/CN.10/1992/CRP.1. Of course, this programme is subject to change if necessary. In particular, the programme for the first week is on an experimental basis, and the Bureau will decide the exact programme for the second week.

If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt its tentative programme of work for the 1992 substantive session as contained in conference room paper A/CN.10/1992/CRP.1.

Mr. ARAUJO CASTRO (Brazil): I am entirely in agreement with the draft programme of work, on the understanding that after the first week the programme will, as you indicated, be decided upon the recommendation of the Bureau.

(Mr. Araujo Castro, Brazil)

I should however like to seek a clarification. I note that during the first week, as was suggested during this year's session of the Disarmament Commission, we are providing for sequential meetings, on the understanding that there would be only one meeting of a subsidiary body taking place at any one time. It does occur to me, bearing in mind the rhythm of work this year and the increased rhythm of work in 1992 - we have working groups that have entered their third year and others that are already in their second - that perhaps during the third week we might need to have simultaneous meetings. My question is whether the Secretariat has interpretation and conference facilities for simultaneous meetings of two or more working groups, or are we excluding this possibility if we adopt the proposed programme of work?

The CHAIRMAN: I can already confirm that, if necessary and if so decided by the Disarmament Commission, the necessary interpretation facilities for simultaneous meetings will be guaranteed. It was the unanimous recommendation of the Bureau of the Commission to hold sequential meetings on an experimental basis for the first week. Afterwards, the Bureau will reconvene and will draw the appropriate conclusions from its experience of this first week. In particular, if the experience of the Chairmen of the Working Groups is a good one, we will continue sequential meetings, and we will then decide how to proceed in the third week according to the wishes of the members of the Commission on the third week. If, on the basis of the experience of the Chairmen, the Commission so wishes, we can then meet simultaneously.

Mr. JAIN (India): Mr. Chairman, my delegation is pleased to be meeting together with all the friendly delegations in the Disarmament Commission once again under your chairmanship. The smooth manner in which

(Mr. Jain, India)

we are proceeding with our decision-making is a tribute above all to your very diplomatic and deft handling of the Commission's proceedings during the year.

I should like primarily to express my delegation's particular satisfaction at the proposed general programme of work, especially the idea that is being introduced on an experimental basis - for the time being for the first week only - of holding the meetings of the four Working Groups on a sequential basis rather than simultaneously. I am sure this idea will be welcomed by all other delegations that, like my own, feel constrained by their small size, which imposes a very serious handicap in that it would be impossible for them to cover all four Working Group meetings effectively.

(Mr. Jain, India)

We agree to the adoption of the programme of work, as the Chairman stated, on a tentative, flexible basis. It is to be reviewed after the experimental first week on the basis of members' opinions of how it worked and on the basis of how much work needs to be done on additional items.

The CHAIRMAN: As there are no further comments, I take it that the Commission decides to adopt the tentative programme of work for the 1992 substantive session as contained in conference room paper A/CN.10/1992/CRP.1.

It was so decided.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to express my deep gratitude to all members of the Disarmament Commission, and to the Secretariat, specifically the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Yasushi Akashi; Mr. Lin, the Commission Secretary; Mr. Kheradi; and all the interpreters and administrative staff who helped us in our work.

At the same time I wish to express my earnest hope that, under the guidance of the new Chairman, Ambassador Andre Erdos, and the other new officers of the Commission, and with the assistance of the very able Chairmen we have just elected to lead the working groups, the 1992 substantive session will be a very successful one.

I declare the 1991 organizational session of the Disarmament Commission closed.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.